

# Draft Memorandum for the Record

## Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

### August 18, 2016 Meeting

10:10 AM – 11:00 AM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2&3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA

David Mohler, Chair, representing Stephanie Pollack, Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

### Decisions

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) agreed to the following:

- approve the minutes of the meetings of July 7 and July 28, 2016
- approve budget adjustments to 3C-funded projects in the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2016 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- approve the work program for the *Interstate 90 and 495 Interchange* project
- approve an adjustment to the FFYs 2016-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- approve Amendment One to the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), *Charting Progress to 2030*
- approve the release of a letter from the MPO to the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) regarding the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on MPO coordination and planning area reform

### Meeting Agenda

#### 1. Public Comments

There were none.

#### 2. Chair's Report—*David Mohler, MassDOT*

There was no report.

#### 3. Committee Chairs' Reports

Jay Monty, At-Large City of Everett and chair of the MPO's Congestion Management Process (CMP) Committee, reported on this morning's meeting of the CMP Committee. The committee members discussed the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) congestion performance measures rule. The committee will submit a comment letter to FHWA. Also at the meeting, staff gave a presentation on the work developing congestion scans.

#### **4. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report—*Tegin Bennett, Advisory Council Chair***

T. Bennett announced that Mark Sanborn has stepped down from his role as vice chair of the Advisory Council as he has accepted a new job opportunity. The role of vice chair is currently unfilled. The Advisory Council will hold elections this fall.

#### **5. Executive Director's Report—*Karl Quackenbush, MPO Executive Director***

K. Quackenbush announced that the next MPO meeting is scheduled for September 15. He also reported that staff provided the final versions of the TIP and UPWP to MassDOT and that the documents have been forwarded to the MPO's federal partners.

#### **6. Meeting Minutes—*Maureen Kelly, MPO Staff***

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of July 7 – with a correction to the attendance list – was made by the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Steve Olanoff), and seconded by the MassDOT Highway Division (John Romano). The motion carried.

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of July 28 was made by the MassDOT Highway Division (J. Romano), and seconded by the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (S. Olanoff). The motion carried. The South Shore Coalition (Christine Stickney) abstained.

#### **7. FFY 2016 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Budget Adjustments—*Bryan Pounds, MassDOT Staff, Chair of the UPWP Committee***

B. Pounds, Chair of the UPWP Committee, presented proposed budget adjustments to 3C-funded projects in the FFY 2016 UPWP. The adjustments are based on a third-quarter review by the MPO's UPWP Committee of progress and spending on tasks and projects by CTPS in the UPWP. The proposed budget reallocations will result in a net zero change in the overall UPWP budget. The UPWP Committee reviewed the adjustments on July 28, and recommended that that the MPO board approve the budget adjustment.

Referencing a memorandum that describes the proposed budget reallocations, K. Quackenbush added that the total amount of funds in the adjustment is \$135,100. The total cost of the line items affected by this adjustment is \$2.285 million, while the total budget for the 3C projects in the UPWP is \$3.391 million.

***Discussion***

D. Mohler asked if the budget for the FFY 2017 UPWP will change as a result of these adjustments. K. Quackenbush indicated that staff is planning to allocate more funds in FFY 2017.

***Vote***

A motion to approve budget adjustments to 3C-funded projects in the FFY 2016 UPWP was made by the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (S. Olanoff), and seconded by the MassDOT Highway Division (J. Romano). The motion carried.

**8. Work Program for Interstate 90/Interstate 495 Interchange  
Project—Karl Quackenbush, MPO Executive Director**

K. Quackenbush introduced the work program for the *Interstate 90 and 495 Interchange* project. This work program supports a MassDOT study of possible reconfigurations to the interchange by providing traffic modeling services.

Central Transportation Planning (CTPS)—the staff to the MPO—will use the statewide travel demand model to provide traffic forecasts for the AM and PM peak travel periods (projecting to the years 2022 and 2040) for a no-build scenario and for four possible interchange reconfigurations. The statewide model is related to and consistent with the MPO's regional travel demand model. The modeling work will account for the conversion to open-road tolling (all-electronic tolling by gantry system) on Interstate 90.

CTPS will provide information from the modeling efforts to MassDOT and its consultant team for use in specialized air quality analyses. CTPS will also conduct air quality and environmental justice analyses.

***Discussion***

In a response to a question from S. Olanoff, K. Quackenbush explained how balanced counts data are used to adjust the travel demand model in advance of forecasting.

C. Stickney, South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree), asked how MassDOT made the decision to prioritize for study the Interstate 90 and 495 interchange instead of other interchanges such as the Braintree Split. She also called on MassDOT to focus more on the Braintree Split. D. Mohler discussed the various reasons for the prioritization of the Interstate 90 and 495 interchange: the project is the result of a MassDOT planning study conducted several years ago; the conversion to all-electronic tolling on Interstate 90 (and the removal of toll booths) provides an opportunity to reconfigure the interchange; and toll revenue can be spent on the project, which lessens the need to spend bond cap revenues.

**Vote**

A motion to approve the work program for the *Interstate 90 and 495 Interchange* project was made by the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (S. Olanoff), and seconded by the MassDOT Highway Division (J. Romano). The motion carried.

**9. FFYs 2016-2020 Transportation Improvement Program**

**Adjustment—*Lourenço Dantas, Manager, MPO Certification Activities Group***

L. Dantas presented a proposed adjustment to the FFYs 2016-2020 TIP to update the description of a traffic signal improvement project in Boston. The change in the description reflects that the project is addressing nine locations instead of ten as originally programmed. The adjustment will not change the project cost.

A motion to approve an adjustment to the FFYs 2016-2020 TIP was made by the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (S. Olanoff), and seconded by the City of Boston (Tom Kadzis). The motion carried.

**10. Long-Range Transportation Plan Amendment One—*Anne McGahan, MPO Staff***

A. McGahan provided a recap of Amendment One of the LRTP, *Charting Progress to 2040*, and a summary of the public comments that the MPO received during the public review period for the document, which was held from July 12 to August 10, 2016.

Amendment One would accomplish the following:

- transfer MPO target funds to Phase 1 of the *Green Line Extension* project (extending the line from Lechmere Station to Union Square in Somerville and College Avenue in Medford) from Phase 2 (College Avenue to Route 16 in Medford), in keeping with Amendment Four of the FFYs 2016-2020 TIP and the proposed FFYs 2017-2021 TIP
- program \$16.8 million in state funds for the additional cost of the *Ramp Construction on I-95 Northbound and Improvements on Canton Street/Dedham Street (Canton, Norwood, and Westwood)* project
- program MPO target funds and earmark funds for the *Reconstruction of Melnea Cass Boulevard (Boston)* project, to align with the proposed FFYs 2017–2021 TIP; the project must be programmed in the LRTP because it costs more than \$20 million
- document statewide funding for two regionally significant projects in the Massachusetts Capital Investment Program (CIP): the *Reconstruction of I-90/I-*

*495 Interchange (Hopkinton, Westborough)* project and a new bridge connection from Burgin Parkway over the MBTA railroad in Quincy

The amendment includes an air quality conformity determination, a greenhouse gas analysis, and a transportation equity analysis.

During the public review period, the MPO received 12 letters from 21 commenters. (A summary of the comments was provided to members along with the full comments.)

The comments expressed the following views and requests:

- support for the *Reconstruction of I-90/I-495 Interchange (Hopkinton, Westborough)* project (eight comments)
- support for the *Intersection Improvements at Route 126/135/MBTA and CSX Railroad (Framingham)* project
- support for the *Bridge Replacement on Route 27 over Route 9 (Natick)* project
- support for programming the updated cost of the *Ramp Construction on I-95 Northbound and Improvements on Canton Street/Dedham Street (Canton, Norwood, and Westwood)* project
- request that the MPO make an additional amendment to the LRTP to program funds for Phase 2 of the *Green Line Extension* project (five comments)
- opposition to the reprogramming of funds from Phase 2 to Phase 1 of the *Green Line Extension* project
- support for public transit, including commuter rail service
- support for the MPO's approach to funding operations and management projects that support bicycle and pedestrian travel, and a request that the MPO increase funding for the Community Transportation Program
- request for identifying transportation needs in the North Shore
- request for a clarification to a project description

Staff proposed responses to the comments for members to review.

### **Discussion**

Ken Miller, FHWA, asked staff to add information to the amendment to reference the specific funding sources for projects that will receive statewide funds, as well as the status of projects. In regard to one project lacking status information in the amendment, the members from the City of Boston reported that the *Reconstruction of Melnea Cass Boulevard* project is almost at the 25% design stage.

K. Miller expressed support for C. Stickney's prior comment regarding MassDOT's decision to prioritize the *Reconstruction of I-90/I-495 Interchange* project instead of other interchange projects, and noted that there are other important interchange

projects in the MPO region. He stated that it would be helpful to know the specifics about the funding sources for that project.

**Vote**

A motion to approve Amendment One to the LRTP, *Charting Progress to 2030* – with the addition of project status and funding information recommended by FHWA – was made by the City of Boston (T. Kadzis), and seconded by the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (S. Olanoff). The motion carried.

**11. Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on MPO Coordination—Elizabeth Moore, MPO Staff**

On July 28, the MPO members heard a presentation about USDOT’s proposed rule on MPO coordination and planning area reform, which would define the metropolitan planning area (MPA) as an urbanized area (UZA, as defined by the Census Bureau) plus the surrounding area expected to urbanize in the next 20 years. The rule would require state governors and MPOs to determine whether to merge MPOs within an MPA, or keep existing boundaries. Regardless, the rule would require the development of a unified LRTP and TIP for each MPA as well as standardized performance measures.

Today, E. Moore presented a draft letter that staff prepared, based on members’ discussion at that meeting, which conveys the MPO’s views on the proposed rule to USDOT. The draft letter reflects the MPO members’ concerns that expanding the geography of Boston Region MPO area would make it difficult for the MPO to maintain geographic equity in the distribution of funds and could make the planning process confusing for the public.

Members then discussed the content of the letter and suggested revisions to strengthen the language in some sections and to add text recommending that USDOT withdraw the NPRM and maintain the status quo for implementing the existing rules. They also advised staff to send copies of the letter to the congressional delegation for this region.

**Vote**

A motion to approve the release of the letter—as revised today—conveying the MPO’s comments on USDOT’s Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on MPO coordination and planning area reform was made by the South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree) (C. Stickney), and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent). The motion carried.

## **12. Members Items**

D. Mohler announced that the MPO will convene next on September 15. The agenda will include a discussion about project cost overruns and municipal contributions to projects.

## **13. Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by the MassDOT Highway Division (J. Romano), and seconded by the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville) (T. Bent) The motion carried.

## Attendance

<b>Members</b>	<b>Representatives and Alternates</b>
At-Large City (City of Everett)	Jay Monty
At-Large City (City of Newton)	James Freas
At-Large Town (Town of Lexington)	David Kucharsky
City of Boston (Boston Redevelopment Authority)	Lara Mérida
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Tom Kadzis
Federal Highway Administration	Ken Miller
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler
	Marie Rose
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Port Authority	Laura Gilmore
	O'Connor
MBTA	Joanna Aalto
MBTA Advisory Board	Micha Gensler
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford)	David Manugian
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Tegin Bennett
South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree)	Christine Stickney
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Steve Olanoff

<b>Other Attendees</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Christopher Blackler	Boston resident
Rafael Mares	Conservation Law Foundation
Bryan Pounds	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Eric Waaramaa	MBTA, Capital Budget



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**MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff**

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Karl Quackenbush, Executive Director

Robin Mannion, Deputy Executive Director

Elizabeth Moore, Director of Policy and Planning

Scott Peterson, Director of Technical Services

Lourenço Dantas, Manager, MPO Certification  
Activities Group

David Fargen

Maureen Kelly

Alexandra Kleyman

Anne McGahan

Jennifer Rowe

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